

# DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife recommends think twice before 'rescuing' young wildlife

*'If you care, leave them there'*

**DOVER** – Whether in their own backyards or while taking a walk outdoors, Delawareans are likely to encounter young wildlife this time of year. DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife reminds well-meaning Delawareans that when encountering young wildlife of any species, the best thing you can do is to leave the animals alone.

While some young animals appear to be abandoned, they usually are not, with their mothers nearby watching over them and waiting for you to move on. Many wildlife species, including white-tailed deer, leave their young while they forage for food, visiting the young only a few times a day, with the young animals following their natural instinct to lie quietly, protecting them from predators.

Removing or handling wildlife can be harmful to both humans and wildlife. Precautions to take with both juvenile and adult wild animals include:

- If you see a young wild animal alone, watch from a distance to see if its mother returns, which could take several hours.
- Be aware that wild animals can be unpredictable and sometimes dangerous, especially if they are in pain.
- Wild animals can carry parasites such as fleas and ticks or diseases such as rabies that can affect you or your pets.
- Remember that it is illegal to raise or keep any wild

animal in Delaware.

Taking a wild animal from the wild will almost certainly ensure that it will not survive, so DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife advises, "If you care, leave them there."

For additional information to help determine if an animal is injured or orphaned, or exhibiting normal behavior and doesn't need to be rescued, visit the Delaware Council of Wildlife Rehabilitators and Educators website at <https://www.dewildliferescue.com/index.html>.

If a young wild animal appears injured or you are certain its parent is dead, please contact the DNREC Division of Fish & Wildlife's Wildlife Section during business hours Monday-Friday at 302-739-9912, or after hours and weekends at 800-523-3336, to determine the appropriate course of action.

*Follow the Division of Fish & Wildlife on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/DelawareFishWildlife>.*

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